

VII. Vision, Goals and Objectives

While the Pedestrian Plan Update supports the Council's adopted vision statement for the City of Asheville, as well as other State, regional, and local plans, the **Vision** of the Pedestrian Master plan itself is that:

Asheville will develop and maintain a pedestrian network that includes sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and greenways that ...

- ***Offer convenience, safety and connectivity to citizens and visitors,***
- ***Encourage and reward the choice to walk and use transit,***
- ***Improve access for those with disabilities, and***
- ***Add to the quality of life and unique character of the City of Asheville.***



The **goals, objectives, and tasks** for pedestrian planning in Asheville follow. **Benchmarks** to measure plan success are at the end.

1. **Increase connectivity** for convenient pedestrian transportation so that walking is the mode of choice for short trips and a viable commuting option.

Objective A. Complete the pedestrian network with priority for mixed-use, commercial and neighborhood areas, and access to schools and parks.

Objective B. Improve pedestrian access and infrastructure on main thoroughfares and State and US roadways.

Objective C. Support and accommodate the Urban Trail, streetscape improvements, and other amenities that improve the pedestrian experience and beautify our City, preserving its unique and historic character.

City Tasks:

- Continue Work through the Metropolitan Planning Organization to ensure that Priority Needs List and Transportation Improvement Program requests are current. (*Transportation Services Staff/MPO*)
- Work with NCDOT to ensure improved pedestrian connectivity where possible within the I-26/240 Connector design. (*Transportation Services staff/MPO/City I-26/240 Aesthetics Committee*)
- Target City projects to install sidewalks along priority thoroughfares, and in proximity to schools, transit stops and other pedestrian generators, and to fill in gaps within zoning districts that encourage pedestrian connections and complete pedestrian thoroughfares, developing a contiguous and continuous sidewalk and greenway network. (*City Engineer*)
- Design and construct greenways and sidewalks to accommodate small area and corridor plans, the Urban Trail and other context needs as appropriate to the location and within priority areas. (*Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Engineering Departments, Sidewalk Crew*)
- Update priorities annually. (*City Engineer, Public Works, Transportation Services*)
- Draft revision of development and subdivision regulations to accommodate the Greenway Master Plan. (*Transportation services, Planning Department*).

2. Improve safety for pedestrians and people with disabilities.

Objective A. Improve visibility of crosswalks and signal timing at intersections to accommodate pedestrians.

Objective B. Fill in gaps of missing sidewalk segments to provide continuous pedestrian thoroughfares.

Objective C. Ensure sidewalk design in accordance with the City's Standards and Specifications Manual.

Objective D. Maintain existing sidewalks and greenways so that they remain clear of debris and overgrown vegetation, and stay in good condition.

Objective E. Step up traffic enforcement of speeding and crosswalk encroachment along major thoroughfares and the downtown.

City Tasks:

- Direct crosswalk improvements toward priority intersections. *(Transportation Services)*
- Improve visibility of crosswalks with visible striping and or pavement treatments. *(Transportation Services, Public Works)*
- Install Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) signal timing and to incorporate pedestrian signals and pedestrian phasing as part of signal upgrades throughout the City. *(Transportation Services/Traffic Engineering)*
- Use available local and State funds to fill-in gaps on critical pedestrian linkages and major thoroughfares. *(Transportation Services, Public Works)*
- Continue application of the City's Standards and Specifications Manual as part of private development and City projects. *(TRC, City Engineer)*
- Utilize community volunteer organizations such as neighborhood associations, Quality Forward, and other groups to assist in pruning, planting, and cleaning activities in conjunction with sidewalks and greenways.
- Continue maintenance activities that respond to citizen concerns and a regular cycle of inspection. *(Public Works)*
- Develop enforcement approach to improve pedestrian safety. *(Asheville Police Department)*
- Restrict bicycle use of sidewalks in the Downtown and Biltmore Village areas. *(Asheville Police Department)*
- Educate motorists and pedestrians on safety considerations. *(Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force)*
- Coordinate with local NCDOT Division Office to ensure maintenance and new construction needs are addressed on State thoroughfares. *(Transportation Services and FBRMPO staff)*

3. **Improve accessibility** of the pedestrian environment for people with disabilities

Objective A. Identify and upgrade/install curb cuts to encourage wheelchair access on all sidewalks and greenways.

Objective B. Identify and remove barriers such as utility poles and boxes and design future construction for ADA compliance.

Objective C. Strategically locate pedestrian signals for the visually impaired.

City Tasks:

- Require upgrade of non-compliant curb cuts and installation of curb-cuts as part of new development. *(City Engineer)*
- Install new, and upgrade non-compliant ramps in priority areas. *(Public Works, Sidewalk Crew)*
- Continue to work with utility companies to incrementally remove poles out of the sidewalk as they are upgraded or replaced. *(Transportation Services)*
- Target identified travel corridors for improvements. *(Transportation Services/Traffic Engineering)*
- Continue to respond to special needs and requests for improvements to travel routes frequented by those with disabilities (for example, City Traffic Engineering worked with the Industries for the Blind to install pedestrian signals for the visually impaired that connect their facility to the Transit Center). *(Traffic Engineering)*
- Contact groups working with people with disabilities to identify special needs. *(Transportation Services)*
- Have maps indicating compliant sidewalks and curb cuts available from the PCS on the City's web page for reference. *(Transportation Services)*



This new sidewalk and ADA ramp was installed as part of redevelopment efforts in the WECAN (Clingman) neighborhood.



Stripes or patterns make crosswalks, such as this one downtown, more visible to motorists.

4. Support a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation and congestion management program.

Objective A. Support transit use through a pedestrian network that accommodates transit stop facilities and connections.

Objective B. Improve connectivity of the overall system of sidewalks and greenways to create convenient, easy, and safe routes to work and school.

Objective C. Promote walking within the Transportation Demand Management Program.

City Tasks:

- Install crosswalk improvements in conjunction with transit stops. (*Transportation Services*)
- Complete pedestrian infrastructure along transit routes. (*Transportation Services, Public Works, Sidewalk Crew*)
- Use available State and Federal transit funds/grants to assist with transit stop amenities (landings, benches, shelters, crosswalks) in conjunction with sidewalks. (*Asheville transit Services, Transportation Services, Public Works*)
- Contribute to transportation demand management marketing and public awareness efforts. (*FBRMPO TDM Coordinator, Transportation Services*)
- Work with new development to construct required sidewalks that accommodate transit stops (*TRC, City Engineer*)
- Promote walking as viable commuter option. (*TDM Coordinator*)



Transit users await connections at the Asheville Transit Center.

5. Manage the sidewalk inventory data and on an on-going basis.

- Objective A. Establish and maintain a database of existing sidewalk and curb cuts as part of the City's Pavement Condition Survey (PCS).
- Objective B. Establish a process for prioritizing identified needs that directs funding towards the most beneficial projects in an equitable manner by applying priority criteria identified in this Plan.
- Objective C. Provide a range of funding options to supplement reliance on local resources.
- Objective D. Ensure that the Technical Review Process is equitable and effective when it comes to pedestrian facility requirements.

City Tasks:

- Assign staff to maintain the Pavement Condition Survey on a regular basis and to update GIS street files from as-builts. This will require establishment of a protocol for updating data and specifying the staff allowed to edit or update data. This will also require establishment and maintenance of a "master" street map for City-wide use so that GIS users throughout the City are working from the most current data (*Engineering and Public Works Departments, GIS*).
- Maintain a master list of potential projects from citizen requests or complaints so that community requests are compiled into, and managed from, a common and current list. (*Transportation Services/Traffic Engineering*)
- Evaluate Priority List of Needs on an annual basis with input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force and by review of community requests. (*Traffic Engineering*)
- Continue process to update sidewalk shapefile to represent sidewalk inventory utilizing 2002 Aerial imagery and PCS data. (*Transportation Services*)



Intern Rita Stanton enters data in the field as part of the Pavement Condition Survey



Pedestrian and Bicycle Task Force members and citizen volunteers conduct a walkability assessment on Merrimon Avenue.

6. Provide **good stewardship** of resources.

- Objective E. Aggressively pursue funding opportunities from a range of sources including Federal, State and local grants, dedicated local funding, and community involvement.
- Objective F. Proactively pursue right-of-way needs in accordance with the Greenway Master Plan and Sidewalk Plan.
- Objective G. Formalize inter-departmental “greenway team” to manage funding, planning, development, r-o-w acquisition, construction and maintenance of greenways.
- Objective H. Maximize Sidewalk Construction Crew toward priority projects.
- Objective I. Track Capital Improvement Project, Fee-in-Lieu, Powell Bill, and local funds.

City Tasks:

- Continue to pursue NCDOT Enhancement and State transportation funds for greenways and sidewalks on an on-going basis. *(Transportation Services, Parks and Recreation)*
- Review Buncombe County foreclosures regularly for right-of-way/land acquisition needs according to the Greenways Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan to identify and bid on needed properties for greenway development or r-o-w acquisition. *(Community Development, Parks and Recreation)*
- Formalize inter-departmental greenway team to manage projects and report to funders and the NCDOT. *(Transportation Services, Engineering Services, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, City Attorney’s Office)*
- Coordinate activity of the Sidewalk Construction Crew to maximize effectiveness and address priorities. *(City Engineer, Transportation Services, Public Works)*
- Track City projects and costs for each sidewalk and greenway segment built in order to monitor Sidewalk Crew effectiveness and construction cost trends. *(Transportation Services, Budgeting)*
- Establish program and policy to allow businesses (particularly hotels, motels, and those catering to the tourism industry and neighborhoods) to contribute voluntarily to pedestrian infrastructure in their area through a recognition program. *(Transportation services)*
- Assign staff or team of staff to monitor and facilitate implementation of the Pedestrian Plan. *(City Engineer).*

7. Improve community health by reducing emissions and increasing physical activity

Objective J. Increase public awareness of the individual health benefits of walking.

Objective K. Promote walking as a pro-active way to reduce vehicle emissions.

Objective L. Complement efforts of the City's Transportation Demand Management Program, Asheville Transit Services, the Early Action Compact and the regional Clean Air Campaign to reduce single-occupancy vehicles through public education.

City Tasks:

- Coordinate with Buncombe County Health Department, the Clean Air Campaign, Clean Air Community Trust, Strive-Not-to-Drive Day Committee and other local organizations to promote walking for health and transportation. *(TDM Coordinator, Transportation Services)*
- Support "Walk to School Day" activities *(Transportation Services, Asheville Police Department)*.
- Continue City staff involvement with the Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force. *(Transportation Services)*



Students and parents from Asheville City Schools participate in the 2003 Walk to School Day.

Photos courtesy of Healthy Buncombe.

Plan Performance Measures for 2005-2007:

➔ Goal 1: Increase Connectivity

1. 4 miles (or 21,120 feet) of new sidewalk constructed on local roadways;
2. Inclusion of Asheville pedestrian elements in the adopted Long Range Plan and Congestion Management System of the MPO.
3. Inclusion of sidewalks or spot pedestrian improvements as part of TIP Projects involving Merrimon Avenue, Long Shoals Road, and Sweeten Creek Road.

➔ Goal 2: Improve Safety

1. 25% decrease in traffic incidents involving pedestrians from 2003 APD Traffic Incident data.

➔ Goal 3: Improve Accessibility

1. Replace 113 non-compliant ADA ramps (50% of those identified).
2. Removal/relocation of sidewalk obstacles with new developments that do not qualify for the fee-in-lieu option.

➔ Goal 4: Support a multi-modal transportation and congestion management program.

1. Establish a baseline of data for pedestrian commuters as part of the City's new TDM program.
2. Increased ridership on Asheville Transit as measured by ATS.

➔ Goal 5: Manage the sidewalk inventory

1. Complete a walkability assessment for Merrimon Avenue
2. Assign Public Works and Engineering Department staff to maintain the PCR database

➔ Goal 6: Good Stewardship

1. Finish construction on the Hominy Creek to Amboy Road Greenway.
2. Begin Construction on the Azalea Park Greenway Connector.
3. Raise or leverage \$1 million dollars for pedestrian oriented projects, including greenways, sidewalks, and crossing improvements from non-local sources.
4. Raise or allocate \$500,000 for pedestrian oriented projects through local sources.

➔ Goal 7: Improve Community Health

1. Decrease number of children and youth, ages 2-18, in Buncombe County who are overweight or considered at risk for being overweight. Benchmark to be established by the Healthy Buncombe Initiative of the Buncombe County Health Department.